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PROPOSED UNCLASSIFIED DRAFT OF
DCI PRESENTATION ON UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES

The great debate today, it seems, is whether the work of our secret intelligence services abroad should be secret. To me, it is a contradiction in terms.

For over two hundred years our nation has recognized the need to collect information vital to our survival. Yet the stories of those valiant men and women of American intelligence in our earliest years were seldom told and are known to few. The explanation is quite simple. There was a clear recognition then that the lives of those agents, and those abroad with whom they worked, were precious. During our nation's first two centuries it was unnecessary to enact laws making disclosure of such intelligence identities a crime. Unfortunately, times have changed; we had to enact such a law in recent years when the lives of our agents became fair game in some circles.

John Jay urged the secret intelligence committee of the Continental Congress to limit intelligence disclosures to that which "may be necessary to promote the common weal, not gratify the curiosity of individuals." It was a measure of the philosophy of our founders. The Congress resolved unanimously that any in that body who breached secrecy "should be expelled this Congress and deemed an enemy to the liberties of America, and liable to be treated as such."

That, too, has changed. Today, national secrets seem to be traded openly to satisfy ego, to gain political advantage, to serve ideological causes and, in Jay's words, "to gratify the curiosity of individuals." The national interest, in such cases, runs a poor last.

There is, of course, good reason to protect intelligence information from such public bantering. Intelligence gives us advantage at the international bargaining table. It permits us to develop countermeasures for surprises planned by adversaries, be they economic, political or military. But such intelligence holds true value to the nation only when it reaches the hands of those who require it. Intelligence sequestered is intelligence lost.

Dissemination of intelligence must be based on trust, a belief that those receiving it will recognize its importance and protect it. Most entrusted with this national treasure do so, but there are still a few who will make off with it for personal advantage. Once spread across the front pages of our newspapers or broadcast, the value of intelligence diminishes rapidly. Since potential adversaries read those same newspapers and listen to those same broadcasts, our advantage is lost, perhaps irretrievably so.

A familiar theme of a few writers and editors is that it is the government's job to keep secrets and their job to find and publish them. I cannot agree that propagating our nation's secrets serves the interest of their audience, the American people. The taxpayer has paid hard-earned money to sustain our intelligence service, and such idle disclosure only increases that cost as we scramble to replace compromised sources of information.

I am in agreement, however, that it is the government's duty--and the duty of every government employee and official--to protect intelligence secrets. Unfortunately, we have not done the job well.

As Director of Central Intelligence I am charged by law to protect intelligence sources and methods. Often, intelligence information must be circulated widely within government to be of practical use. Our consumer

community extends well beyond the intelligence agencies. Accurate and timely intelligence information is a commodity in much demand by our policymakers. Thousands of government workers have a valid need to know it, as do thousands of contractor employees who must build and operate collection systems or analyze the products of those systems. Congressional committees and their staffs need to know intelligence sources, methods and product for the purposes of oversight, authorization and funding. We have established procedures to assure such official dissemination is effective and as secure as possible without imposing an oppressive regimen.

Recently I asked my staff to review the damage to the nation caused by unauthorized disclosure of classified intelligence. They compiled a list of about seventy such incidents over a nine-month period, and examined each in some detail.

What was the cost to the country of those tantalizing disclosures?

Some were life-threatening. Others forced us to seek alternatives--costly alternatives sometimes--to established sources which had dried up as a result of the compromises.

More than eighty-five percent of the unauthorized disclosures of intelligence information revealed with some precision what the United States knew through intelligence collection efforts of the plans, operations and intentions of foreign nations. A few even disclosed in detail how we gained the information!

The reaction to some was immediate. Alerted to our collection successes, foreign governments imposed measures to close off our avenues of access. This was not difficult for them in two of the cases examined, since the articles

made it sufficiently clear that each could have been obtained by U.S. intelligence from only one foreign source.

Vital and costly intelligence resources are threatened by such disclosures. In some instances in the past, they had to be scrapped, to be replaced where possible with expensive, ad hoc at best, means for providing our senior policy makers with the information they need to make critical foreign policy and defense decisions.

It is difficult for me to discuss these matters fully in public. Ours is a free press read around the world. To deal in specifics would confirm to both friend and foe alike the accuracy of certain news stories. Allies with whom we share a common trust would be given further concern that their secrets are not safe with us.

What I am about to say, therefore, has been highly sanitized, in order to convey the substance of this serious problem, yet protect that which would give comfort to potential adversaries. The cases cited are broadly sketched, with specific details changed to protect our sources and methods. They are, however, true.

Picture the task of a foreign intelligence official stationed at an embassy in Washington. On some days, the morning papers provide entre to the words of gossipy government employees who have disclosed precious national secrets and compromised our intelligence sources and methods. A foreign intelligence officer would be strained to pay someone the true value of that information, even if the rare government employee could be found who would sell out this country. Yet, the value of the intelligence he or she relays to superiors at home often costs only twenty-five cents--the price of the newspaper.

One article recounted highly-classified intelligence information about a weapon system discovered to be in an advanced stage of development by a foreign power. It did not end there. Not only did the article report that we now knew what the potential adversary wished to keep secret from us, it labored to explain what defensive countermeasures we would implement to defend our population from the new threat.

It is important to recognize this was not the case of a "whistle-blower" complaining about cost over-runs by a defense contractor. What a public official would hope to gain from such a betrayal of a solemn trust is as unclear to me as I am sure it is to you.

One article advised readers, foreign and domestic, that another country's measures to thwart our collection methods had been unsuccessful--that we were still getting through the screen. Another advised that recent countermeasures a foreign nation had introduced were, indeed, successful and that the United States no longer knew what was going on.

It might be debated infinitely as to which of these was the most valuable advice to the foreign power; in both cases the leakers had provided information worth millions. What frightens me is the one revealing to the foreign country that our efforts to overcome its protective measures have been unsuccessful. This can only lead to broader application of those measures, and serve as an incentive for broader violations of existing treaties in the certain knowledge they will not be detected. We will be empty-handed at the conference table.

Two articles reported advanced intelligence collection systems under development by the United States and the expected date we might have them operational. If one takes the reports at face value, the leaker has told an

opponent not only what to expect, but how much time remains to develop ways to thwart the next generation of U.S. intelligence collection systems.

I doubt that anyone will question that the net effect of these disclosures is any less than if there had been an espionage transmission of the information to a foreign power.

Our espionage laws are clearly defined and highly limited, and it is possible that none of the perpetrators of the unauthorized disclosures, if apprehended, would be convicted, despite the level of damage. The betrayal and misuse of our nation's secrets must carry a greater element of risk than pilfering pencils, memo pads and paper clips. We must accept that these disclosures not only constitute a drain on the tax-payer's pocketbook, they save potential adversaries millions they would otherwise need to spend in seeking the information, often without success.

This then, is not just a problem for the government; it is a burden to the public. I ask you to join me in speaking out against this costly abuse, and in condemning publicly those who perpetrate it.